



Minister for Commerce
Minister for Finance
Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

8 May 2006

Mr Stephen Frappell
Director
Budget Estimates
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
COMMITTEES

9 MAY 2006

RECEIVED

Dear Mr Frappell

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Questions on Notice taken at the Budget Estimates 2005-2006 Supplementary hearing of General Purpose Standing Committee No 2 on Wednesday 12 April 2006, in relation to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Please find attached the Department's responses to these questions.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Della Bosca', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Della Bosca MLC

Encl.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE
NO.2 - BUDGET ESTIMATES 2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING
12 APRIL 2006**

**RESPONSE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND HOME
CARE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

QUESTIONS

BOARDING HOUSES

The Hon John Ryan MLC asked:

- (1) What was the outcome of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care's visit to an unlicensed boarding house in Crystal Street, specifically in relation to the result of the local council's fire safety inspection? (page 10)
- (2) Will the Department agree to investigate the unlicensed boarding houses operating from: 95 Crystal Street, Marrickville; 117-119 Crystal Street, Marrickville; 47 Audley Street, Petersham; 34 Stanmore Street, Enmore; 97 Cavendish Street, Stanmore; 59 The Boulevard, Marrickville; 35 Warren Road, Marrickville; and 26 Edgeware Road, Enmore? (page 9, 16)
- (3) In relation to the unlicensed boarding house premises at Palmer Street in the city:
 - (i) Did an officer from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care visit the premises to carry out an inspection and look at the residents physically?
 - (ii) How the Department worked with the owner of these premises to determine that the premises did not need to be licensed?
 - (iii) What was the date the Department provided the information requested by the co-owner of the Palmer Street premises?
 - (iv) On what date did the co-owner determine that the premises did not require a license?
 - (v) Provide a copy of the screening tool provided to the co-owner of the Palmer Street premises? (page 9, 17-18)
- (4) How many times has the Department applied for a warrant as provided by section 5 of the Youth and Community Services Act, which allows them to forcibly inspect the premises? (page 9, 18)
- (5) Can the Department provide more specific details as to the location of the 17 Departmental staff involved in licensing duties and whether this role constitutes a major or minor part of their roles? (page 18)
- (6) Can the Department provide information as to whether or not the level of screening of boarding house residents it has conducted can be rationally compared to the number of people who live in boarding houses and whether that represents a sufficient amount for that service? (page 18)
- (7) Can the Department provide details for the last five years of how often complaints about unlicensed boarding houses have been sustained following an inspection? (page 10, 21)

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Ms Sylvia Hale MLC asked:

- (8) Can the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care provide any research references that indicate that group housing is less satisfactory than cluster housing? (page 6)

The Hon John Ryan MLC asked:

- (9) Does the Department operate a 'needs' register for supported accommodation? If so, how many people are on the register in each of the Department's region? (page 20)

POLICE CHECKS FOR STAFF IN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

The Hon John Ryan MLC asked:

- (10) Is the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care aware that a service provider has had to wait up to eight weeks to obtain police checks for new staff that they wish to employ? If so, is the Department doing anything about this situation because it would cause enormous disruption to the sector? (page 19)

BREAKDOWN OF TOWNS AND PLACES COVERED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S REGIONS

The Hon John Ryan MLC asked:

- (11) Could the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care provide a list of towns and places in each of its regions, particularly given the restructure of the north and west region? (page 20)

NARDY HOUSE

The Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans and The Hon John Ryan asked:

- (12) Can the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care provide details of the offer made to Nardy House, particularly how many staff would be employed and how many people would be cared for at any one time under this model? (page 22)

ANSWERS

BOARDING HOUSES

- (1) An officer from the Department's Metro South Region inspected the premises at 117-119 Crystal Street, Petersham on 2 March 2006. As a result, the region advised Marrickville Council on 3 March 2006, of its concerns regarding fire safety issues and poor health standards at the premises. On 21 April 2006, the council advised the region that fire safety at these premises now complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia.
- (2) In response to concerns raised by the Hon John Ryan MLC regarding a number of unlicensed boarding houses in the Marrickville area, the Department can confirm that officers from the Metro South Region have conducted visits to all of the addresses which he provided, in order to investigate whether any of these premises required licensing in line with the provisions of the *Youth and Community Services Act 1973*. It should be noted that the address referred to at 97 Cavendish Street, Stanmore was incorrect. This should have been 47 Cavendish Street.

One property has been found to be outside of the scope of the Act, and further investigations are being carried out for seven of the properties. Referrals have been made to the local council where issues have been identified that relate to requirements under the Building Code of Australia.

(3)(i-ii) Staff from the Department's Metro South Region visited the Palmer Street premises in the city on 20 April 2006.

The co-owner agreed to a process where, providing residents gave their consent, regional staff would undertake an assessment to determine if any residents met the criteria for a 'handicapped person' under the Act.

Of those residents who consented to this assessment, none met the criteria for a 'handicapped person' as defined in the Act.

(iii) 15 December 2005.

(iv) The co-owner of the premises notified the Department's Metro South Region on 27 February 2006, that in their view, the premises did not require a license.

(vi) A screening tool was not provided to the co-owner, as this tool is for screening on entry only. A tool to support the assessment of residents living in unlicensed boarding houses, who may fall under the Act, was provided. A copy is attached at **Tab A**.

(4) The Department had obtained two warrants prior to 1998 and none since.

(5) In January 2006, the Department had a total of 17 staff whose responsibilities involved, to a varying degree, the monitoring of licensed boarding houses. Of these:

- a. two staff are located in Hunter Region,
- b. three staff are located in Metro North Region,
- c. five staff are located in the Department's Metro South Region,
- d. two staff are located in Western Region; and
- e. five staff are located within the Program Administration Unit in the Department's Central Office.

This allocation of staff reflects the extent of licensed residential centres in each region.

Work with licensed residential centres formed a major part of the role of seven of the 17 staff.

In addition, an officer is allocated to respond to licensing queries and issues in the Department's Southern and Northern regions.

(6) Screenings to prevent people whose needs could not be met from entering a licensed residential centre were introduced in late 1999. The numbers of people screened has fluctuated: 266 in 1999-June 2000; 350 in 2000/01; 368 in 2001/02; 248 in 2002/03; 129 in 2003/04; 73 in 2004/05 and 109 to date in 2005/06. The full service review of licensed residential centres, conducted a minimum of every three years, monitors compliance with the requirement for screening.

(7) In addition to the complaints referred to in questions 1, 2 and 3 above which are currently under investigation, the Department has responded to a further 18 complaints in relation to unlicensed boarding houses during the last five years.

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

- (8) There is considerable pressure on the disability system and demand for supported accommodation for people with disabilities. There is also a recognition that the group home model may not be the most effective at meeting the different needs of all people needing supported accommodation. The Department is therefore seeking to provide a broader range of options for people with a disability which is consistent with contemporary accommodation models.

As per the first discussion paper released by the Government, there already exists a range of cluster models of accommodation provided to people with a disability and other population groups. These examples are presented in the *Models of Supported Accommodation for People with a Disability* discussion paper which is available on the Department website at www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au.

The evidence presented in the papers released by the Department and Family Advocacy suggests that a range of indicators influence the quality and outcomes of support provided to residents in specialist accommodation services, not simply the nature of the physical facility. Both the model of support and trained staff are significant influencers on quality and outcomes, including community participation and integration.

- (9) Each of the Department's regions has a register of adults with a disability who have indicated that they require a supported accommodation placement and are interested in suitable vacancies that arise in the government or non-government sector. People requiring supported accommodation complete an application form and forward it to the relevant Regional Placement Committee facilitator. When vacancies arise the Regional Placement Committee consider people on the register, their potential compatibility and prioritises them for referral to the vacancy.

Based on information for the 2004/05 financial year:

- A total of 976 people requested accommodation.
- There were 104 vacancies in group homes.
- Vacancy Management Committees considered 337 applications from people short listed for vacancies. Of these, 99 people filled vacancies, which occurred in group homes, and 238 people were not placed in a group home during 2004/05.

The breakdown of this information by region is as follows:

	Hunter	Metro North	Metro South	Northern	Southern	Western	Total
No. of people requesting accommodation	183	165	199	279	23	127	976
No. of vacancies in regions	32	27	28	13	3	1	104
No. of people short listed for vacancies	81	117	79	39	14	7	337
No. of people short listed but not placed	49	90	56	26	11	6	238
No. of people placed	32	27	23	13	3	1	99

The Department has previously reported 99 vacancies in 2004/05. The figure was in fact 104 vacancies filled by 99 people. This was a calculation error as demonstrated by the data above.

POLICE CHECKS FOR STAFF IN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

(10) Yes. The Department is aware that between February and March 2006, some police checks for non-government organisations did take up to eight weeks to process. At the time, the Department raised concerns with New South Wales Police.

The Department understands that, in early 2006, as a result of restructures in a number of non-government organisations, a higher than average number of applications for police checks were made, which led to a backlog of applications during this period. It should be noted that delays in processing times can also occur as a result of incomplete details on application forms, which requires New South Wales Police to request further information to complete the checking process.

The Department has been advised by New South Wales Police that the backlog has now been cleared and processing times for these checks are currently in the region of two to three weeks.

BREAKDOWN OF TOWNS AND PLACES COVERED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S REGIONS

(11) Information is provided at **Tab B**.

NARDY HOUSE

(12) The offer to Nardy House was for four of the beds to be funded at approximately \$400,000 per annum for centre based respite as part of a proposal of a blended model of four funded centre-based beds and two brokered respite beds at the Nardy House respite facility. This budget was developed by the Department consistent with other similar centre-based respite care models in non-government organisations in New South Wales that assist people with complex needs, similar to the target group defined by the Nardy House Committee.

The Department's budget analysis included a review of existing respite services provided by non-government organisations in a range of locations across the state. The grant contribution by the Department to these equivalent service types ranged from \$265,806 to \$420,000 per annum. The offer put to the committee remains a reasonable and genuine offer that would enable the facility to be opened.



John Della Bosca MLC



Questions to Ask Potential Residents of Your Unlicensed Facility

Name: _____

D.O.B: _____

Last Address: _____

How long there?: _____

Are you on medication?: _____

Do you receive the Disability Support Pension: _____

Do you have a Case Worker?: _____

Do you have a manager/decision maker with:

- The Office of the Protective Commissioner. _____

- The Office of the Public Guardian. _____

Do you require assistance with any of your day to day activities, chores or tasks? For example, food preparation, personal care, community access, public transport, medication, decision making, personal safety or money management.

ASSESSMENT TOOL

Skill	Independent	Semi-Independent – may require prompts	Needs Active Supervision	Requires Physical Assistance	Requires Physical Assistance But Has The ability To Learn	Totally Dependent
Mobility						
Diet						
Eating						
Toileting						
Self Care						
Laundry						
Behaviour (general)						
Road safety						
Stranger danger						
Goods & Services						
Behaviour (community)						
Asking for information						
Leisure/ Recreation						
Communication						
Medical						
Personal/Injury						
Mental health(general)						
Delusions						
Hallucinations						
Anxiety/ Fearfulness						
Harmful to self and/or others						
Medication						
Financial Management						
Decision Making						
Emotional Support						
Personal Safety						
Sleep Patterns						
Transfers						



DADHC Regional Boundaries

DADHC Region	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area	
Metropolitan North	Hornsby	Northern Sydney	
	Hunter's Hill		
	Ku-ring-gai		
	Lane Cove		
	Manly		
	Mosman		
	North Sydney		
	Pittwater		
	Ryde		
	Warringah		
	Willoughby		
	Auburn		Cumberland/Prospect
	Baulkham Hills		
	Blacktown		
	Hollroyd		
	Parramatta		
	Blue Mountains		Nepean
Hawkesbury			
Penrith			

Metropolitan South	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area		
Metropolitan South	Ashfield	Inner West		
	Burwood			
	Canada Bay			
	Canterbury			
	Leichhardt			
	Marrickville			
	Strathfield			
	Bankstown		South West Sydney	
	Camden			
	Campbelltown			
	Fairfield			
	Liverpool			
	Wingecarribee			
	Wollondilly			
	Botany Bay			South East Sydney
	Hurstville			
	Kogarah			
Randwick				
Rockdale				
Sutherland Shire				
Sydney				
Waverley				
Woolahra				

Hunter	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area	
Hunter	Gosford	Central Coast	
	Wyong		
	Cessnock		Hunter
	Dungog		
	Lake Macquarie		
	Maitland		
	Merrima		
	Murrumbidgee		
	Muswellbrook		
	Newcastle		
	Port Stephens		
	Scone		
	Singleton		
Upper Hunter			

DADHC Region	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area	
Southern	Kiama	Illawarra	
	Shellharbour		
	Shoalhaven		
	Wollongong		
	Bega Valley		Southern Highlands
	Bombala		
	Boorowa		
	Cooma-Monaro		
	Eastern Capital City		
	Eurobodalla		
	Greater Angle		
	Greater Queanbeyan		
	Harden		
	Snowy River		
	Upper Lachlan		
	Yass Valley		
	Young		

Northern	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area	
Northern	Bellingen	Mid North Coast	
	Coffs Harbour		
	Gloucester		
	Greater Taree		
	Great Lakes		
	Hastings		
	Kempsey		
	Lord Howe Island (SLA)		
	Nambucca		
	Ballina		
	Byron		
	Clarence Valley	Far North Coast	
	Kyogle		
	Lismore		
	Richmond Valley		
	Tweed		
	Armistead Dumaresq		New England
	Barraba		
	Bingara		
	Glen Innes		
	Gunnedah		
	Guyra		
	Inverell		
Manilla			
Moree Plains			
Narrabri			
Nundle			
Parry			
Quiindi			
Severn			
Tamworth			
Tenterfield			
Uralla			
Walcha			
Yallaroi			

DADHC Region	Local Government Area	DADHC Local Planning Area	
Western	Bathurst	Central West	
	Blayney		
	Cabonne		
	Cowra		
	Evans		
	Forbes		
	Lachlan		
	Lithgow		
	Oberon		
	Orange		
	Parkes		
	Rylstone		
	Weddin		
	Balranald		Orana/Far West
	Bogan		
	Bourke		
	Brewarrina		
	Broken Hill		
	Central Darling		
	Cobar		
	Coolah		
	Coonabarabran		
	Coonamble		
	Dubbo		
	Gilgandra		
	Mudgee		
	Narramine		
	Unincorporated Far West (SLA)		
	Walgett		
	Warren		
	Wellington		
	Wentworth		
	Albury		Riverina/Murray
	Berrigan		
	Bland		
	Carrathool		
	Conargo		
	Coolamon		
	Cootamundra		
	Corowa		
	Culcairn		
	Deniliquin		
	Greater Hume		
	Griffith		
	Gundagai		
	Hay		
	Holbrook		
Hume			
Jeridene			
Juneee			
Leeton			
Lockhart			
Murray			
Murrumbidgee			
Narrandera			
Temora			
Tumbarumba			
Turnut			
Urana			
Wagga Wagga			
Wakool			

Note: Local Government Areas are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Geographical Classification (2004). Additional Local Government Area changes are gazetted throughout the year by the NSW Government.